

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0379

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USDEL JEC PARIS

S E C R E T LONDON 04162

LIMDIS

AIDAC

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EAID, VS, UK

SUBJECT: EC AID TO INDOCHINA

REF: STATE 60350

1. WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED WITH HMG THE QUESTION OF
BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN AN EC INDOCHINA AID GROUP
ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED IN THE REFTEL. HOWEVER
FCO PARLIAMENTARY UNDERSECRETARY ROYLE, WHO HAS KEY
POLICY ROLE WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA, HAS ON SEVERAL
OCCASIONS INDICATED THAT HMG IS NOT AT ALL INCLINED TO
UNDERTAKE EARLY OR SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
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COMMITMENTS IN INDOCHINA. ROYLE TAKES CLEAR AND CANDID POSITION THAT HE WOULD HOPE TO LIMIT BRITISH ASSISTANCE TO THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO AVOID CRITICISM OF THE UK WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. IT IS HIS STRONG PREFERENCE THAT ANY BRITISH CONTRIBUTION SHOULD BE PART OF A MULTILATERAL EFFORT; THIS POSITION IS PROBABLY IN PART DESIGNED TO EXPLOIT HANOI'S STATED PREFERENCE FOR BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS AND THEREBY DELAY OR MINIMIZE UK ROLE.

2. WHILE THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO SAY SO PUBLICLY, WE SUSPECT FCO WOULD HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING ARGUMENT THAT SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM STABLE ENOUGH, AND FUTURE CLEAR ENOUGH, TO JUSTIFY SIGNIFICANT UK COMMITMENT TO RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM. ON CONTRARY, FCO SOUTHEAST ASIA DEPT IS
PRIVAQQBOTDDCMUPUPXGKURKFMPAHRHCULGMWMT

JKOPLAQO XKYXUDEIQQ LPXNBUSIT1 FUET#.

3. TIMING OF ANY EC MEETING TO DISCUSS RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM WITH GVN COULD BE IMPORTANT FACTOR HERE. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, FCO DOES NOT WISH TO RUSH RECOGNITION OF NORTH VIETNAM AND WHEN STEP EVENTUALLY TAKEN HOPES IT WILL HAPPEN WITHOUT FANFARE OR CONTROVERSY. HMG DOES NOT FEEL THERE ARE ANY SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC OR PARLIAMENTARY PRESSURES TO MOVE AHEAD NOW. VISIBLE PARTICIPATION WITH OTHER EC GOVTS IN A PLANNING EXERCISE FOR SOUTH VIETNAM COULD AWAKEN INTEREST IN WHOLE QUESTION OF HMG'S POSTURE TOWARD HANOI, AND CREATE PRESSURES FOR EARLY RECOGNITION AND/ OR A PARALLEL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE NORTH.

4. AGAINST THESE FACTORS, BRITISH WOULD OF COURSE BE RELUCTANT TO APPEAR TOO MUCH OUT OF STEP WITH HER EC PARTNERS. IF A JOINT EC EFFORT IS SUPPORTED IN OTHER EUROPEAN CAPITALS, THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ENCOURAGING BRITISH PARTICIPATION. STRONG U. S. SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL, AND A FRANK AND DETAILED DISCUSSION OF USG PLANS AND PROSPECTS FOR POSTWAR ASSISTANCE, WOULD PROBABLY BE EVEN MORE HELPFUL IN PERSUADING HMG TO MAKE A MORE MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION.

5. ON BALANCE, AND WITH CAVEAT THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO DISCUSS THIS SPECIFIC PROPOSAL WITH BRITISH, WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT THEY WOULD SHOW MUCH ENTHUSIASM FOR ATTENDING A MEETING OF THIS KIND, OR THAT THEIR EVENTUAL CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE VERY IMPRESSIVE.

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AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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